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Warren Gamaliel Harding

WHO LIVED & DIED IN
HIS COUNTRY'S
SERVICE



AN APPRECIATION BY
WILLIAM E. BARTON, D.D.
AND OTHER ESSAYS

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❧ INTRODUCTION

THE NATION and the world were shocked to learn of the untimely passing of President Harding on August 2, 1923, in the midst of the performance of his duties as the Chief Executive. In keeping with the universal approbation of his career, closed so abruptly, it was deemed proper by The Print Shop Incorporated to create as a memorial to the dead President, a work of craftsmanship in which might be portrayed from different points of view the outstanding traits of his character and greatness—first, as seen by one who has followed and studied his deeds; second, as exemplified by the traits of Abraham Lincoln; and lastly, as shown by his own thoughts on the greatness of another.

The essay, “Warren Gamaliel Harding—An Appreciation,” was written for this memorial by the Rev. William E. Barton, pastor of the First Congregational Church at Oak Park, Illinois, and moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches.


On the afternoon of August tenth, Dr. Barton delivered a memorial address on President Harding on the common in Foxboro, Massachusetts, as the President’s body was laid to rest at Marion, Ohio. During this tribute, reference was made to the famous address by the Rev. Isaac Smith, delivered April 19, 1865, in Foxboro at the time of the funeral of Abraham Lincoln. The similarity of the great problems confronting the two presidents at the time of their passing permits the reproduction, here, of that address.

President Harding’s address at the Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial at Washington, May 30, 1922, was taken as the most appropriate expression of his own measure of greatness.


WARREN GAMALIEL HARDING 🌹 AN APPRECIATION
BY WILLIAM E. BARTON, D.D.

ONE of the finest traits of human nature is that which prompts men to speak kindly of men and women recently deceased. Every conviction of fair play forbids us to speak needlessly against the character of those who can no longer answer us. Every generous impulse of the human heart, every conviction of right reason and conscience justify the time-honored admonition to speak only good of the dead. While he was living, Warren G. Harding was in the midst of political discussion, and he received his full share of hostile criticism; it is most gratifying that since the moment of his decease all heat and bitterness have disappeared, and the only voices that are heard from press and pulpit and in private conversation are those of appreciation.

It is good to know that the last words he heard on earth were words of discriminating praise, read to him by Mrs. Harding from a current magazine. It might easily have been otherwise. A general of the Civil War was found at his desk many years after the close of that conflict, dead

from heart disease, and lying before him a severe criticism of his personal & military career, which had just appeared in a periodical. Mrs. Harding could have found, if she had searched, some less pleasant articles. If any thrill of satisfaction proved the immediate occasion of President Harding's death, let us be glad it was something of that character, and not the sharp stab of an attack upon him that put an added and fatal strain upon a weakened and overburdened heart. There are certain nations of heathen people who whip their idols when their prayers are unanswered; we in America lash and abuse our presidents and other officials. The voice of Him that stilled the tempest in the long ago speaks again in the solemn and unanswerable summons of death, and immediately there is a great calm. We are in little danger of over-praising President Harding. Already we are able to see his life in perspective with sufficient clarity of vision to assure us of his essential qualities. We know that whatever we say of him now of loving and  loyal admiration, the impartial historian will reaffirm with greater emphasis.

President Harding came to the White House under stress of peculiar difficulties. He was a compromise candidate before the convention that nominated him, and not many of those delegates who finally voted for him did so from individual preference. He came to be considered

the best available candidate, & that was the best that was said about him. Our scheme of party nomination by convention tends to pit the leading candidates against each other so directly and with such vehemence of opposition  as to favor the ultimate selection of men relatively unknown and of less pronounced personality or conviction. It is one of the perils of democracy that it is likely to be controlled by less than its average intelligence and so to become a government by its own second best.

Out of such a situation Warren G. Harding emerged as a nominee for the presidency, as out of a similar situation emerged Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln never forgot that he was nominated by a convention two-thirds of whose delegates were opposed to him, and elected to the presidency by less than a popular majority. Many are the difficulties of a president thus chosen.

Harding encountered other difficulties. His was the largest popular vote that ever elected a president. It was a dangerously large majority. It was made up of elements inherently inharmonious. It was a majority impossible to hold permanently in line. It was certain to experience the reaction which every such movement encounters.

Harding's administration encountered the back-wash and disillusionment that followed the war. What Kipling called "the cruel wars of peace" are fought under no estab-

lished restraints of international law. They are fierce and uncompromising. Have we forgotten the bitter passion of the reconstruction period following the Civil War? It did more than the war to embitter the South, and it came within one vote of removing from his high position the unfortunate man who, in that emergency, was serving as president of the United States. It is relatively easy to be a war president, but may the good Lord pity the man who, in America or any other nation, has laid on him the impossible burden of pleasing all factions in the period following a war. Look back over our own history to the days following the Revolution, the days which John Fiske calls ❧ “the critical period in American history,” the days in which Washington, almost despairing, cried, “We are one nation today, and thirteen tomorrow!” Or look across at any nation in Europe today, and behold the swift changes in political leadership, the chaos and the hatred and the despair.

Harding encountered so much of this as America’s position and power permitted her to feel. His was the undertow which follows the high tide of war. It was most fortunate for America that she had in that hour as her President a man such as he. Perhaps his very limitations had their value. He had been long in political life, & had awakened no antagonisms. He was a man of tact and ❧

patience. He was not a man of sudden & impulsive leadership, nor yet a man of isolated and self-confident haughtiness. He was a harmonizer, a man whose gentleness and friendliness & good will counted for more than passionate and inspiring ability. Whether he was a great man or not, he proved a great leader: one who knew men, and knew politics, & knew Congress, & knew the heart of America. He knew the small town as well as the city; he was as familiar with Main Street as with Broadway and Pennsylvania Avenue. He was such a man as America needed.

The first impression which President Harding made upon a man meeting him was not one of his towering greatness, but of his simple and honest friendliness. No one could hold his hand and meet his level gaze without feeling assured that he was talking with a sincere and truthful man. He was solid firm in his standing, but he moved easily and without self-consciousness; he did not stand as if rooted in his place, as Wilson did, nor move with nervous animation, as Roosevelt did. He did not have the austerity of Benjamin Harrison, nor the ponderous and impressive stolidity of Grover Cleveland. He was solidly placed on his feet, yet he was free in his movements, and he moved as his thought and conversation moved, with dignity and kindness.

He was a man who counseled with men, & respected

other men's judgment; but he had clear convictions of his own. Those men reckoned without their host who thought that because he was amiable he was altogether easily influenced. It was easy to change his opinion when he could be shown that his opinion was in error, for he was a man of open mind; but he did not change lightly or without serious thought.

Warren G. Harding was a Christian, quiet and unostentatious in his religion, but sincere and true. He did not speak lightly of his faith, but he spoke freely and unmistakably. He trusted God and the people.

We are in no present danger of rating him too highly. The future will justify our best words concerning him. He was the product and the exponent of America's common life, a man of the people, a leader sent of God. He has justified America's faith in him. His name has a permanent place in our temple of fame. He is one more contribution of America to the world's ideal and hope. He feared God and kept faith with the people. Let his name stand in perpetual honor.

❧ ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE TOWN HALL AT FOXBOROUGH MASSACHUSETTS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE FUNERAL OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN · APRIL 19, 1865 BY REV. ISAAC SMITH, A. M.

Fellow Citizens:

WE assemble today under circumstances of unparalleled solemnity. Never, from the landing of the *Mayflower* to the fourth anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter; from the nineteenth of April, when the great struggle commenced at Lexington & Concord to the nineteenth of April that witnesses the funeral rites of President Lincoln has anything occurred so calculated to thrill the national heart as the closing scene in the great drama last week. We may well doubt if the annals of the world can furnish aught that surpasses it.

The assassination of Caesar in the Senate House; of William, Prince of Orange, by Gerard; the fate of Richard II and of Edward V; the Gunpowder Plot; and the long list of dark deeds in ancient and mediaeval ages harmonized with the spirit of those times, the deep darkness and degradation of the people. But in the nineteenth century, in enlightened America, in the land of bibles, of sanctuaries and Sabbath schools; a land imbued with puritanic influences, and so near the ashes of a Washing-

ton, and when the universal shout of victory had scarcely died away—it is then that death, and such a death ❀❀ falls with startling effect, with stunning power. The poet Young has said:

“Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow
A blow which, while it executes, alarms
And startles thousands by a single fall.”

Here the assassin threw death into the center, & rolled its dark waves over sympathizing millions. Earth has no fiend of darker hue. Hell has no fury with more malignant fate. How deplorable the thought, that man, under the combined power of all vile influences, should ever sink so low! Alas, that we are compelled to include such under the generic name; that we can neither disclaim the species, nor wipe from the race the record of this foul deed! *Sic semper tyrannis* was as truly misapplied as were the purpose & the act with which the language was associated. No tyrant falls in this instance. No deed of wrong was avenged. No good to others could result. The employers of the wretch fought as blindly in this as they have against their own cherished schemes throughout. The leaden missile was aimed at their truest friend. One baser than Judas, more cruel than Herod, more bloody than the hounds of the South, has appeased malignity in blood.

Nations . . . like individuals, have their reverses and

triumphs. Ours, in its infancy, encountered some of the most unnatural & powerful of enemies. But, as in individual experiences, we were developed and matured by antagonistic influences. Our civil war, however, was the most appalling, and threatened to prove the most disastrous. The North still had important advantages. One was the foundation of society had been laid in piety, in faith and prayer. The Puritans were influenced by religious considerations when they crossed the ocean, and erected the Church, the school house, and the college in these western wilds. Not so with the South. They belonged to a stratum in society. Descendants of cavaliers, devotees of wealth & fashion, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," they verged to the opposite extreme, locally, morally, and in every point of view. The progeny of both were true to the instincts, the habits and sentiments of their sires. The one engaged in the peaceful pursuits, the useful arts of industry; the other taught and transmitted the blandishments of artificial life, the cruel code of revenge, and the arbitrament of war. The former gloried in their own honorable toil; the latter, in extorting it, unrequited, from a subjugated race. The God, to whose ears the groans of oppressed Israel ascended, and who judged between them and Pharaoh, has never blended such distinctions. In one instance, when He had a work of deliverance to

effect, He raised up Moses; in the other, Abraham Lincoln. The suffering was more extensive & severe in the latter instance, and a similar interest in it was equally consistent. Mr. Lincoln has, with propriety, been regarded as the special gift of God for an important emergency. And it may well be doubted whether any other man could have filled his place so usefully to the people.

He rose from obscurity. He had felt the pressure of poverty. His early culture was very limited & imperfect. He was thus thrown upon his own resources. Schooled in adversity, he was conversant with it. No man could better enter into the feelings of the masses. He used the most unadorned language, whether in State papers, public speeches, or private conversation; and if urged, in any instance, to adopt a more classic diction, his reply was: "The people will understand it." He came into power at a most critical juncture. No president, in any previous war, had equal difficulties to meet. Washington, to whom we properly attribute so much, had a less difficult task. He seems to have commenced with a determination not to sacrifice life needlessly, and not to suffer the national honor to be in any way impaired. Honest in his own nature & designs, he had some confidence in the honesty of his foes. He therefore hoped to effect something by conciliation. He had much to learn, as all others had. But he was

quick to discern. He readily saw the practical working of his plans, & advanced with a firm and even course. If he had gone faster or farther, he would have been compelled to proceed alone. If he had done less, he would, in reality, have effected nothing. Had he manifested more determination there might have been a division at the North. As it was, he carried the millions with him, and with a remarkable unanimity.

His great proclamation of freedom was issued at a time when the nation was convinced of its propriety, & when the civilized world must see the issues, with no alternative but to justify the North or approve of slavery.

Our President was genial in his nature, and kind in his intercourse with all. His fondness for story-telling relieved many an anxious thought, and made the cares of State rest more easily upon him. And sometimes, perhaps his anecdotes served to conceal the conflicting emotions that preyed upon him. His integrity of heart and honesty of purpose were proverbial. We may well hope that his soul was allied to the Great Supreme by a living faith. When about to leave his Western home to assume the responsibilities of his high office he said: "Pray for me." And he seems to have felt a reliance upon a sustaining & overruling Providence in all the duties of his elevated position, nor did he make use of his power for the punishment or

humiliation of his opponents. While determined to sustain the dignity of the government, he leaned to the side of mercy. Some have thought he exercised the pardoning power too freely, and that he did not deal with the enemy with sufficient severity. These, and many other things, speak the goodness of his heart, while they argue nothing against the soundness of his judgment. He was judicious with reference to other nations. When he saw them take advantage of our difficulties, and was urged to retaliatory measures, he would reply: "One thing at a time." He had recently, by proclamation, asserted our rights in foreign ports, conscious that we were then in a position to defend them.

He was re-elected by a very large majority. No one had enjoyed that distinguished mark of popular favor for more than a quarter of a century. It was a triumphal approval of his policy & of his deeds. It was an emphatic expression of gratitude and confidence. And no one who voted for him will now regret his act. He entered on his second term under flattering auspices. The Confederacy was waning, & tottering to its fall. The nation had responded promptly to his calls. The hearts of the people were with him. The enemy were in evident alarm. With the recapture of all the important forts, of almost all the cities on the Atlantic coast, the occupation of Richmond, & the capitulation

of the principal army of the insurgents, our honored President had reached a point from which he could calmly survey the past, and calculate with apparent certainty on the future. His first proclamation had been read in rebel bar-rooms "amid roars of laughter;" but the laugh was changed. . . And though he had no disposition to exult over a fallen foe he must have felt a relief & satisfaction in view of his indisputable success. The arch traitor, whose fulminations had been so audacious and defiant, had fled for his life, with "none so poor to do him reverence." Henceforth he will wander, like his great archetype, "to and fro in the earth," till dying he will leave

"A villain's name to other times,
Linked to no virtue, but a thousand crimes."

Before God he is chargeable with the blood of tens of thousands, and with the life-long wretchedness of thrice that number more. Single crimes affect us; but multitudes confound and render us insensible to their enormity.

Booth has, as is supposed, murdered one; Davis, with certainty, legions. And the latter was more truly the murderer of Lincoln than the direct assassin was. Nay, more; he has aimed his dagger at a nation's heart, & would have drawn its life-blood. If, since the murderer of Abel, one ever deserved a murderer's or a tyrant's fate, it is Jefferson Davis. He may escape it, but if he has the least relic of con-

science left it will "lash him naked 'round the world," a fugitive and a vagabond, till he returns to the earth; and even that, like Jonah's receptacle, might well spew him out.

At the commencement of last week we were permitted to rejoice over the success of our arms. Never was the victor's joy more ecstatic, or the cause for it more clear. It was natural, then, to rally around the President as we had in the severity of the conflict. Beloved & confided in before, he then appeared, to many, almost superhuman. They seemed to cherish the feeling, if they did not use the language of Herod's adorer's, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Then caution slumbered, and the divine protection was withheld. Then the free act of the cowardly wretch terminated his usefulness and his life. The dark deed is done. Its circumstances are all known. No one can wish to dwell upon them. The Capital is robed in the drapery of death. A nation is clothed in sack cloth. Millions sincerely mourn. One of the most remarkable men in the world is no more. A president, second only to Washington, is today yielded to sepulture, the acknowledged kindred of earth and worms.

No other man could have filled his place during his first term. We will devoutly acknowledge the goodness of God in preserving him through the severity of the struggle. His death, under any circumstances, would have been a

national calamity. But could he have passed by a gradual and gentle transition to the spirit-land, that all might have seen a Heavenly Father's will, it had been some relief. Could he have given us a word of counsel or a dying blessing; or could we have known the conflicts or triumphs of his mind, it would have seemed more easy to acquiesce in his removal. But it is all over with him. "This is the last of earth." And yet he still lives. And as monarchs often "rule from their sceptered urns," his name, his principles and deeds, will have a controlling influence in the land for ages to come. "The blessing of many ready to perish will rest upon him." The millions set free by his agency will transmit his praises to generations yet unborn. And long will it be ere they speak his name, or think of him, without a tear. It has been said by another: "If his name was written on every star, and emblazoned in every page of history, his panegyric would not be overwrought." But the good man sleeps in death. The great man rests beneath his honors like the warrior "with martial cloak around him." The statesman is enshrined with his admirers at his feet. The friend of the colored race is pallid and mute amid the millions whose chains have fallen, and whose hearts are too full for utterance.

The ruler of a simple, yet lofty, peerless grandeur leaves his name the heritage of man, and the world to read his

worth "in a nations tears." As we can neither adorn the rose nor paint the rainbow in more beautiful hues, so language fails; the pencil is impotent, and sculpture is inadequate to the full portraiture of him whose loss we deplore.

"Ah, had he lived in that proud day,
Ere Greece became the grave
Of glorious men long passed away,
The brilliant and the brave;
The marble cenotaph sublime,
The column and the crown
Would still transmit to future time,
His record of renown."

But that record is not merely given in charge to "marble and ever-enduring brass;" his is "one of the few immortal names that were not born to die." The counterpart of that murderous deed is also familiar. Three in the service of the government, and high in the esteem of the people, were subjected to a deadly assault at the same hour with the President. If they survive, as now appears probable, it will be no abatement of the assailant's guilt. The language applied to those actually slain in a former conflict is not inapplicable here:

"In pride, in all the pride of woe,
We tell of them, the men laid low,
Who for their country bled."

To the Secretary of State must be attributed much of our success. Able in counsel, firm in purpose, & indefatig-

able in effort, he has labored harmoniously with the president, commanding respect from the people at home and the nations of the earth. His was a life too valuable to the country not to evoke the shafts of the rebellion. They may each present a living proof, concurring with the ashes of the immortal slain, to evince the spirit of the leaders and minions of the rebellion. But the star-spangled banner still waves! It is lowered reverently today in acknowledgment of One above, but yielding to none beneath. Men may die; but our nation, with its principles and polity, will live.

There is some anxiety to know what course will be pursued by the successor in office. I have been acquainted with the history and course of Andrew Johnson during a period of nearly thirty years. I have felt intensely interested in his case, as showing what the unaided efforts of a poor and friendless youth may accomplish. I have repeatedly given the outlines of his remarkable history in different places in public. What occurred on the inauguration day affected me exceedingly. It shows that he is human, & admonishes us not to put confidence in princes, or place unbounded reliance on any arm of flesh. But, previous to that unfortunate occasion, no shadow has rested on his fair fame. Though a southerner, he has always been true to the Union. When the sanctuary of home was invaded

by those who had been protected by the government ❀
equally with himself, when his property was in danger,
when life itself was imperilled, he was as true as the needle
to the pole.

Gold could not purchase him, nor the halter terrify
him. The siren song, or the trumpet tongue that would
shake the firm purpose of his soul, met no response there.
A Leonidas in courage and determination, he was more
than Spartan when the hordes of the oppressor assailed
him. In my opinion, he would not have been the man for
the country in 1861; he is probably the best man it can
produce in 1865. His resolute, determined manner might
have complicated our difficulties then; he will show no
quarter to traitors now. It was feared that our worthy ❀
President, though firm in the struggle, would look with
what he would intend as a feeling of magnanimity upon
a fallen foe, and in the goodness of his heart propose such
terms as would make treason look to those in after ages as
a very trivial affair; that an amnesty might be proclaimed
❀ which should embrace not the deceived and deluded
masses merely, but the leaders also; that there might be
such a restoration of property & reinstatement in all the
privileges of citizenship as would seem put a premium on
rebellion.

President Johnson will undoubtedly insist that if there

cannot be complete "indemnity for the past," there shall be at least "security for the future." He knows well what he, with the Unionists of Tennessee, has suffered. He will think of the butchery of surrendered soldiers, of bayonets thrust through the wounded & dying, of the abuse of the dead, of the trinkets made from their bones, of the tens of thousands tortured in prisons and starved to death, of the multitudes still more unfortunate, who linger out a life of wretchedness, of the infernal plot to murder his predecessor, of the "chivalry" in the sick chamber of the Secretary of State; and rather than concede or compromise, he would say in the language of Dr. Kirk: "God of battles, lead us on! Death to slavery and to traitors!" His course in regard to the "doomed institution" may be inferred from the fact that when he came to Washington to assume the position to which he was elevated by the suffrages of the people, he brought with him from Tennessee its ratification of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery, procured through his own exertions.

We would not encourage the spirit of revenge. We would breathe everywhere "Good will to men." As ministers of the Gospel, I speak for one, and think I may for the others present—we have conscientiously preached peace, & rejoiced in hope that her "olive branch" would wave over the nations of the earth and "wreathe

her chain” around the thousand millions in harmonious brotherhood. But this necessity was forced upon us. We had no alternative. Before us was an appeal to arms, or the loss of all that was dear to man or precious in the sight of God. But now, by the love we bear to our country, to our contemporaries north and south, and to unborn myriads that shall occupy this vast extent of territory; after all this expenditure of blood and treasure, and especially after what has made this day’s solemnities necessary; in the name of humanity, in the name of God, we protest against “healing the hurt of the people slightly.”

Nor will it be! All honor to the man who was the gift of God, & the people’s choice; and who fulfilled his high mission as he alone could 🌹 Memory shall wreath her mourning cypress around his clay-cold form, and keep ceaseless vigils over his honored dust. But while we abate not our veneration for him, let us now repose a suitable confidence in his successor. Like Joshua, he takes up the work where Moses left it. Nor let us forget that the Being who arranged things as his ancient people approached the land of beauty & abundance still maintains control over our destinies. Kossuth, while in this country, remarked: “There is a providence in every fact.” We can see those providences from the earliest history of our country in all its conflicts with foreign powers; we see them in the con-

vulsive throes through which we have now so far passed. In this day of our calamity, we should not distrust Him whose paternal care has ever proved unfailing.

A remarkable pathological fact is stated by the surgeons attending on Mr. Seward; that the wounds inflicted on him, acting on the principle of a counter-irritant, actually relieved the extreme inflammation resulting from the fracture of his jaw. And thus, what the assassin intended for his destruction, so far resulted in his good. It illustrates a great principle which underlies the government of God—good from seeming ills. This great calamity is in the hands of Him whose over-ruling energy can render it subservient to the national good.

After the experience of the last four years it does not admit of a question whether a republic, founded in intelligence and piety, can live. Let the inscription not only appear on our national coins, but be deep in our hearts, "In God we trust," and a career of greatness and glory is before us, of which only the dim foreshadowing appears. And at this hour there is no government under the broad canopy of heaven that rests on a firmer basis than ours. Would that our lamented President had lived to discern some of the remoter fruits of his anxieties & toils, some clearer evidences of those stupendous results which his administration has aided to secure. But "One soweth, &

another reapeth." "Other men labored, & we are entered into their labors." And in the ages of the future the yet undeveloped effects of what has been sown in tears, in agony and blood, will appear grand and glorious beyond all the indications of the present. Millions on millions will turn almost adoringly to these times, make pilgrimages to the grave to which the services of today point, and bless the memory of him who reposes there. And when in future days "the light of memory backward streams," or the historian shall search for the brightest, the purest, the most ❀ illustrious of names, towering in majestic proportions above the myriads of ephemeral fame, he will find in ❀ ❀ simple, unadorned, yet colossal and unapproachable grandeur, the name of Abraham Lincoln ❀

Fresh & fragrant be the laurels that encircle his brow. Henceforth he is enshrined in imperishable renown. But while art & treasure combine to give immortality to his pure fame, we entrust it to neither. We will point to no proud mausoleum, to marble, or to bronze. Emphatic it may be, yet too cold are their utterances. He has entered the portals of the national heart; and there his memory will be cherished while the moon shall wax and wane, & till the lustre of the stars shall fade

❖ ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT HARDING AT DEDICATION OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

IT is a supreme satisfaction officially to accept on behalf of the Government this superb monument to the savior of this Republic. No official duty could be more welcome, no official function more pleasing. This memorial edifice is a noble tribute gratefully bestowed, and in its offering is the reverent heart of America; in its dedication is the consciousness of reverence and gratitude beautifully expressed.

Somehow my emotions incline me to speak simply as a reverent & grateful American, rather than one in official responsibility. I am thus inclined because the true measure of Lincoln is in its place today in the heart of American citizenship though nearly half a century has passed since his colossal service & his martyrdom. In every moment of peril, in every hour of discouragement, whenever the clouds gather there is the image of Lincoln to rivet our hopes & to renew our faith. Whenever there is a glow of triumph over national achievement there comes the reminder that but for Lincoln's heroic & unalterable faith in the Union these triumphs could not have been.

No greater character in all history has been more eulogized, no rugged figure more monumental, no likeness more portrayed. Painters & sculptors portray as they see, and no two see precisely alike. So, too, is there varied emphasis in the portraiture of words. But all are agreed about the rugged greatness, the surpassing tenderness & unfailing wisdom of this master martyr. History is concerned with the things accomplished. Biography deals with the methods & the individual attributes which led to accomplishment.

The supreme chapter in history is not emancipation, though that achievement exalted Lincoln throughout all the ages. The simple truth

is that Lincoln, recognizing an established order, would have compromised with the slavery that existed if he could have halted its extension. Hating human slavery as he did, he doubtless believed in its ultimate abolition through the developing conscience of the American people; but he would have been the last man in the Republic to resort to arms to effect its abolition.

Emancipation was a means to the great end—maintained union & nationality. Here was the great purpose; here the towering hope; here the supreme faith. He treasured the inheritance handed down by the founding fathers, the ark of the covenant wrought through their heroic sacrifices and builded in their inspired genius. The Union must be preserved. It was the central thought, the unalterable purpose, the unyielding intent, the foundation of faith. It was worth every sacrifice, justified every cost, steeled the heart to sanction every crimson tide of blood.

Here was the great experiment—popular government and constitutional union—menaced by greed expressed by human chattels. With the greed restricted & unthreatening, he could temporize. When it challenged Federal authority and threatened the Union, it pronounced its own doom. In the first inaugural he quoted and reiterated his own oft-repeated utterance: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, & I have no inclination to do so." He believed in maintaining inviolate the rights of the States, but he believed no less firmly in the perpetuity of the Union of the States. The Union, having been contracted, could not be dissolved except by consent of all parties to the contract. He recognized the conflicting viewpoints, differing policies and controverted questions. But there were constitutional methods of settlement, and these must be employed.

In the first inaugural address he stressed the great general principle that "In our constitutional controversies we divide into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no alternative, for continuing the Government is acquiescence on one side or the other. If the minority

in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which, in turn, will divide & ruin them. Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limits, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or despotism."

Here spoke the statesman, proclaiming deliberate public opinion as the supreme power of civilization, easily to be written into law when conviction should command. It ought to be tonic to the waning confidence of those of today who grow impatient that emphasized minority views are not hurried into the majority expressions of the Republic. Deliberate public opinion never fails.

Later, closing his first inaugural, when anxiety gripped the nation, there spoke the generous, forgiving, sympathetic man of undaunted faith: "I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot's grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as they surely will be, by the better angels of our nature."

But he appealed in vain. Passion was aflame, and war was made the arbiter. Americans fought Americans with equal courage and valor. There was an ambiguity in the Constitution which only a baptism in blood could efface. One may only speculate on what another might have done, but fate seems to have summoned the one great hero best fitted to lead to the Union's salvation.

His faith was inspiring, his resolution commanding, his sympathy reassuring, his simplicity enlisting, his patience unfailing. He was faith, patience and courage, with his head above the clouds, unmoved by the storms which raged about his feet.

No leader was ever more unsparingly criticised or more bitterly assailed. He was lashed by angry tongues, and ridiculed in press & speech

until he drank from as bitter a cup as was ever put to human lips, but his faith was unshaken, and his patience never exhausted. Someone sent me recently an illumined and framed quotation which fell from his lips when the storm of criticisms was at its highest.


"If I were trying to read," he said, "much less than answer all the attacks made upon me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the best I know how, the very best that I can; and I mean to keep on doing it to the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me will not amount to anything. If the end brings me out all wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

He knew, of course, before the assassin robbed him of fuller realization, that the end was bringing him out all right. He knew when swords were sheathed and guns laid down that the Union he saved was riveted anew and made forever indissoluble. He knew that in the great crucible of fire & blood the dross had been burned from the misdirected patriotism of seceding states, and the pure gold restored to shining stars in dear Old Glory again. He knew he had freed a race of bondmen, & had given to the world the costly proof of the perpetuity of the American Union. But I cannot restrain the wish that he might somehow know of the monuments to his memory throughout the world & that we are dedicating today, on behalf of a grateful nation, this matchless memorial whose forty-eight columns, representing forty-eight states in the concord of union, testify that the "end brought him out all right."

Reflecting now on the lampoon and heedless attack and unjustifiable abuse which bruised his heart & tested his patience, we may accept its expression as one of the abused privileges under popular government, when passion sways and bitterness inspires, but for which there is compensation in the assurance that when men have their feet firmly planted in the right, & do the very best they can and "keep on doing it," they come out all right in the end, and all the storm does not amount to anything.

He rose to colossal stature in a day of imperilled Union. He first appealed, and then commanded, and left the Union secure and the nation

supreme. His was a leadership for a great crisis, made loftier because of the inherent righteousness of his cause & the sublimity of his own faith. Washington inspired belief in the Republic, in its heroic beginning—Lincoln proved its quality in the heroic preservation. The Old World had wondered about the New World experiment, and was quite ready to proclaim its futility when the Civil War was threatening, but Lincoln left the Union unchallenged for all succeeding time. Not only was our nation given a new birth of freedom, but democracy was given a new sanction by that hand of divinity itself which has written the rights of human kind and pointed the way to their enjoyment.

Abraham Lincoln was no superman, like the great Washington  whose monumental shaft towers near by as a fit companion to the memorial we dedicate today, the two testifying the grateful love of all Americans to founder & saviour—like Washington, Lincoln was a very natural human being with all the frailties mixed with the virtues of humanity. There are neither supermen nor demi-gods in the government of kingdoms, empires, or republics. It will be better for our conception of government and its institutions if we will understand this fact. It is vastly greater than finding the supreme, if we justify the confidence that our institutions are capable of bringing into authority, in time of stress, men big enough and strong enough to meet all demands.

Washington & Lincoln offered outstanding proof that a representative popular government, constitutionally founded, can find its own way to salvation & accomplishment. In the very beginning our American democracy turned to Washington, the aristocrat, for leadership and the greater task of founding permanent institutions. The wisdom of Washington, and Jefferson, and Hamilton, & Franklin was proven when Lincoln, from the cold of privation, of hardship, of barren environment & meagre opportunity, rose to unquestioned leadership when disunion threatened. Lincoln came almost as humbly as the Child of Bethlehem. His parents were unlettered; his home was devoid of every element of culture & refinement. He was no infant prodigy. No luxury facilitated, or privilege hastened, his development; but he had a God-given intel-

lect, a love for work, a willingness to labor, and a purpose to succeed. ❀ Biographies differ about his ambition; but Herndon, who knew him as did no other, says he was greatly ambitious. I can believe that. Ambition is a commendable attribute, without which no man succeeds. Only inconsiderate ambition imperils.

Lincoln was modest, but he was sure of himself, & was always greatly simple. Therein was his appeal to the confidence of his country; when he believed he was right a nation believed him to be right, and offered all in his support.

His work was so colossal, in the face of such discouragement, that none will dispute that he was incomparably the greatest of our presidents. ❀ He came to authority when the Republic was beset by foes at home and abroad, and re-established union and security. He made that gesture of his surpassing generosity, which began reunion. Let us forget the treachery, corruption, and incompetence with which he had to combat, and recall his wisdom, his unselfishness, his sublime patience. He resented no calumnies upon himself; he held no man his enemy who had the power & will to serve the Union; his vision was blinded by no jealousy. He took his advisors from among his rivals, invoked their patriotism ❀ and ignored their plottings. He dominated them by the sheer greatness of his intellect, the singleness & honesty of his purpose, and made them responsive to his hand for the accomplishment of the exalted purpose. ❀ Amid it all there was a gentleness, a kindness, a sympathetic sorrow, which suggests a divine intent to blend mercy with power in supreme attainment.

This memorial, matchless tribute that it is, is less for Abraham Lincoln than for those of us today, and for those who follow after. His surpassing compensation would have been in living, to have his ten thousand sorrows dissipated in the rejoicing of the succeeding half-century. He loved "his boys" in the army, and would have revelled in the great part they played in more than a half-century of the pursuit of peace, and concord ❀ restored. How he would have been exalted by the soldiers of the Union after the "mystic chords" were "touched by the better angels of

our nature.” How it would comfort his great soul to know that the states in the Southland join sincerely in honoring him, and have twice since his day joined, with all the fervor of his own great heart, in defending the flag. How it would soften his anguish to know that the South long since came to realize that a vain assassin robbed it of its most sincere & potent friend when it was prostrate and stricken, when Lincoln’s sympathy & understanding would have helped to heal the wounds & hide the scars, and speed the restoration. How, with his love and freedom and justice, this apostle of humanity would have found his sorrows tenfold repaid to see the hundred millions to whom he bequeathed reunion & nationality, giving of their sons and daughters, and all their fortunes, to halt the armed march of autocracy and preserve civilization, even as he preserved union!

More, how his great American heart would be aglow to note how resolutely we are going on—always on—holding to constitutional methods, amending to meet the requirements of a progressive civilization, clinging to majority rule properly restrained, which is the “only true sovereign of a free people,” and working to the fulfillment of the destiny of the world’s greatest republic.

Fifty-seven years ago this people gave from their ranks, sprung from their own fibre, this plain man holding their common ideals. They gave him first to service of the nation in the hour of peril, then to their pantheon of fame. With them and by them he is enshrined and exalted forever. Today American gratitude, love, and appreciation give to Abraham Lincoln this lone white temple, a pantheon for him alone

